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April 21, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Review of SG 161/11

1. I have reviewed the agreed tripartite report to the Standing Group by its Intelligence Committee on Soviet Bloc Strength and Capabilities (SG 161/11). Except as indicated below it appears to be generally consistent with agreed US national intelligence estimates.

a. On p. 4 of Part I, the statements that we have "no firm evidence" that the various announced Soviet force reductions "have been or will be made although some minor reductions may have been effected" and that Soviet ground force levels "have remained relatively constant during the past ten years..." imply a more static situation than has probably been the case. NIE 11-4-57 (paras. 98-99) estimates that "substantial changes in numerical strength have in fact occurred," most likely a substantial rise during the Korean War and a subsequent reduction, for which the Soviets perhaps took propaganda credit by their earlier announcements. There is also some inconsistency between the statement that "the strength... of Soviet ground forces will remain broadly the same in the foreseeable future" (para. 3) and NIE 11-4-57, though the latter does estimate (para. 101) that future reductions will not be substantial.

b. The estimates of Soviet heavy bomber strength on p. 81 of Part II vary significantly from the majority view in NIE 11-4-57, both in giving a single strength figure by year instead of a bracket and in tending toward the high side, e.g. 600 in mid-1961 instead of 400-600. BADGER

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strength in Long Range Aviation is also kept constant at 900 through 1962 instead of rising to 1000-1100 by mid-1959 as in the NIE.

c. SG 161/11, Part II, p. 47, gives the Soviets a capability to produce 20 new type guided missile submarines by 1962, a portion of which "may be nuclear powered." NIE 11-4-57, para. 144a, gives the Soviets a capability for building about 70 submarines with "advanced weapons systems," about 20 of which "probably would be nuclear powered."

2. On the most important of the above points, the heavy bomber question, our national estimates are now being reviewed in the light of evidence recently obtained, which in our present view would tend to support lower figures than those stated in the November estimate.

Signed

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

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